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INDICATIONS IN PRAVDA OF THE SOVIET ATTITUDE
ON EAST-WEST ISSUES
(Secret)

Summary

The recent exchange of public statements between the US and the Soviet Union leaves the major issues dividing East and West essentially unchanged. The primary purpose of the Soviet leaders in publishing the Pravda article was not to offer any new concessions designed to open the way for the settlement of issues, but to counter the President's strong initiative and to preserve the maximum bargaining strength and freedom of maneuver for Soviet diplomacy.

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The primary purpose of the Soviet leader in publishing the detailed statement in Pravda was not to offer any new concessions designed to open the way for the settlement of outstanding issues dividing East and West. Their purpose was rather to counter President Eisenhower's strong initiative by conveying the impression, primarily to America's European allies and to non-Communist Asian countries, that the USSR is now ready for serious discussions with the West in order to relax dangerous international tensions.

The Pravda article establishes the main lines of attack on what Moscow regards as vulnerable points in the US position. Its criticisms of the President's statement are designed to force the US Government to spell out its exact position on those points which the Soviet leaders believe will create the greatest embarrassment for the US and on which they regard their own positions to be least vulnerable. They have attempted at the same time to preserve their maximum bargaining strength and freedom of maneuver, and thus have left open some area for possible accommodation with the West.

Pravda's treatment of the issues under discussion may be divided into three broad categories. These reflect the current objectives of Soviet foreign policy and suggest the range within which the Soviet leaders might maneuver in any East-West negotiations. The first category involves those questions on which the Soviet Union may be willing to enter into serious negotiations because a compromise settlement might, in the long run, further Soviet objectives without endangering the solidarity and security of the Soviet Orbit or its power position relative to the West.

For example, Pravda appears to leave the door open for negotiations on both Korea and Austria. The brief reference to Korea merely repeats Molotov's 1 April statement in support of the Chinese and North Korean proposals. An effort is made to demonstrate that it was a Communist initiative which opened the way for a possible armistice. This treatment suggests that Moscow still adheres to a decision to end the fighting in Korea in order to remove the most conspicuous and provocative source of conflict between East and West.

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The editorial seems to leave some room for negotiation on Austria since it does not specify previous unacceptable demands. Moscow can be expected to continue to bargain for its own terms for negotiation on Austria.

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It is unlikely that the Kremlin would actually agree to sign an Austrian treaty, although the stakes are not as high as in Germany. Soviet adherence to an Austrian treaty would involve the withdrawal of Soviet troops from an advanced position in the heart of Europe, the loss of an important economic stronghold, and the removal of the legal pretext for maintaining troops in Hungary and Rumania. The USSR is not likely to make this sacrifice unless it receives more compensation than the West has yet been willing to offer, or unless Communist concessions on Korea, combined with minor conciliatory moves elsewhere, do not succeed in producing the desired effect of reducing Western vigilance and strength.

Pravda contains no response to the President's challenge to release some World War II prisoners, but earlier remarks by Soviet officials suggest that the USSR may free prisoners of various nationalities previously held as "war criminals." The Soviet leaders may make this concession if they believe that it would produce a favorable reaction in the West at little cost to the USSR.

The second main category of issues in Pravda's reply to the President's address includes those on which the Soviet Government may, for tactical reasons, consent to negotiate, not with a view to reaching compromise agreements acceptable to both sides, but to strengthen Soviet positions and to advance Soviet objectives, mainly by producing divisions within the Western coalition.

There is no hint that the Soviet Union is ready to enter serious discussions for a German settlement. The Soviet leaders are not likely to make any concessions that would entail the loss of their hold on East Germany. Pravda bluntly states that the President's speech does not offer a basis for the solution of the German question. The President's statement that West Germany "deserves to be a free and equal partner" in the EDC and that this offers the only safe way for Germany to achieve "full, final unity" is clearly unacceptable to the Russians.

Any exchange of notes or negotiations regarding a German treaty would be regarded by Moscow as a device by which to

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block the rearmament of West Germany and its integration into the EDC and NATO. These tactics would be intended to support Soviet efforts to undermine the Adenauer Government by reminding the Germans that the alignment of West Germany with the West can only lead to an impasse and that the only hope of reunification is to attempt to negotiate directly with the USSR. Soviet diplomacy will also strike at what Moscow regards as a vulnerable point in the West's approach to the German question -- the susceptibility of German opinion to the argument that the West, particularly the US, is ready to sacrifice German hopes for reunification in order to achieve non-German objectives in Europe.

The second fundamental question on which the Soviet leaders may hope to advance their objectives by generating confusion and dissension within the non-Communist world centers on possible discussions of Far Eastern problems. Pravda devotes considerable attention to the President's failure to mention the Chinese People's Republic, its "national rights in the UN," and its territorial rights, including Formosa. In this connection, the article attempts to turn points three and four of the President's list of "precepts" which govern US conduct in world affairs against American policies in Asia. Moscow obviously expects that the reference to American attempts to "turn steadily developing events backwards" will have a strong appeal among Asian peoples, as well as for some of America's allies who have been critical of past US actions in Asia. This same area of world opinion is the target of the references to the "US-organized political and economic blockade" of Communist China and to "murmurs against trade limitations with countries of the democratic camp dictated by the USA."

Pravda also provides an indication of probable Soviet positions on other questions which may be discussed in a Far Eastern political conference in its rejection of the President's appeal for an end to the "direct and indirect attacks upon the security of Indochina and Malaya" on the grounds that the Soviet Union can not be expected to "retard the liberation movement of the colonial and semi-colonial people" and that these movements are not the result of Kremlin inspiration and intrigue. Moscow thus serves notice that it will resist any attempt to link the conflicts in Southeast Asia with the Korean war in either the Korean armistice talks or in subsequent negotiations on general Far Eastern questions. The Kremlin also implies that it will not intervene to restrain the current Viet Minh offensive in Indochina.

The third main category of East-West issues as outlined by Pravda includes those questions which the Soviet Union regards

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as vital to its security and power position and which, therefore, will never be offered by Soviet leaders as bargaining points in negotiations with the West. The USSR's predominant position in Eastern Europe is the most conspicuous example of the issues in this category. To the President's call for an "end of the present unnatural division of Europe" and for the "full independence of the East European nations" with the "free choice of their own form of government," Pravda simply observes that "it would be strange to expect the Soviet Union to intervene in favor of installing the reactionary regimes overthrown by these peoples." The rather awkward attempt to divert the discussion of this issue to Western refusal to admit some of the Orbit states to the United Nations suggests a Soviet awareness of its vulnerable propaganda position.

The question of the international position of Communist China also falls within the category of issues upon which the USSR will refuse to compromise. This is indicated by the strong arguments Pravda advances on behalf of the Peiping regime and by the contemptuous reference to the Nationalist Government.

The treatment of the President's disarmament proposals also seems to reflect an awareness of the weakness of Moscow's propaganda position. Pravda admits that the "Soviet side does not object to these points," but complains that they are of too general a nature. However, the only alternative offered is the standard Soviet demand for the immediate prohibition of atomic weapons and the percentage reduction of armed forces. The unyielding opposition to any plan involving adequate international inspection and regulation of armaments provides no evidence of Soviet willingness to compromise on this issue.

A comparison of the respective positions of the US and the USSR as set forth in the addresses of the President and the Secretary of State and in the Pravda editorial shows how narrow is the field of possible accommodation between East and West.

Pravda rejects the essential elements of the President's program and insists that the "correctness" of Soviet foreign policy "has been proved by the entire course of international development." The implication is clear that the Soviet Government cannot accept the President's statement as a basis for serious negotiations on the fundamental issues which divide the world.

It would thus appear that this US-USSR exchange of public statements leaves the major issues dividing East and West

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essentially unchanged. There is no indication in the Pravda editorial that the Soviet leaders regard these issues as being "ripe for solution." Nor do they recognize any significant shifts in "the actual relationship between the forces and the factors which determine the international situation" which would impel them to grant major concessions to the West in order to negotiate a general settlement.

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